Mrs. Flo Kennedy
8 East 48 St.,
New York, N.Y.

12/4/78

Dear Flo,

If it had not been for the message delivered by our red-necked friend - and you should hear him sing!! - I'd still have written you about other matters.

I was off making a couple of my now rare speeches at colleges and was getting near Washington when Jerry's testimony began. I listed to it in the train, in the cab to Jim's office, in the office and in the cab to and from jail when we went to see John Ray. While there is much I did not and could not hear you and Pepper were really superb. More than deserved congratulations to you both even if you contributed to an extraordinarily difficult next day for Jim as Stokes tried to recapture some self-respect. And in the effort lost the little that remained to him. The Greed! He's out to rehabilitate Joe McCarthy.

Before getting to the matters about which I planned to write once I knew you were involved I'll explain why my appearances are so rare, a partial comment in response to your message.

In 1968 or 1969 Dick Gregory introduced me to his lecture bureau. They were excited because I was an authentic expert on both the JFK and King assassinations. They agreed to book me. I was delighted, and not only because I was and had been totally broke, as you may recall.

Next thing I know they called to tell me they could not do this. (Some of this is in correspondence to which you are welcome.) The reason is because Mark Lane claimed he had an exclusive contract. As I pointed out this could not be because they were advertising and booking Clay Shaw. They insisted on what I'm sure is not true, that Mark had this exclusive and was insiting on it. So I offered again to speak on King and added that I would speak to the first black groups they could book without fee. Mark's influence, through if not exclusively through Kathy Kinsella, was such that they not only did not accept this unusual offer- they didn't even reply.

You and countless other people know Mark one way, one side, the only one he has any reason to let most people see. There is an entirely different person, as I hope neither you nor Bill Pepper has occasion to learn.

Except that you both not be hurt I have no interest in pursuing this. I appreciate your interest and your hope and wish it could be, but I have found, from long trying and with this one in particular, that co-habitation with an octopus is impossible.

I know of Pepper's relationship with Lane. I know of his efforts for Lane to crib some of my work. Lane has not asked for it, such is his dedication to his "cause." Pepper's part in this does not trouble me. He may not have understood what he was doing and I'm sure he does not understand what he is into.

Jerry has also told me that Pepper volunteered to represent Carol, and John in any civil actions. That they had a lawyer to whom Pepper did not speak first also does not trouble me. I'm sure Jim Lesar isn't bothered, either. He can't keep his working nose above that in which he is already swamped. I believe that both have viable actions. If Carol and John want my advice I will recommend to them that they accept this offer, if Jim is co-counsel, Lane is totally detached and I am listened to. (This does not mean that it be done, just heard.) I know these people and what has happened to them very well and I would like to believe that I have earned their trust. I also believe that Jim's knowledge and mine would be essential.

You are my friend so please listen to me carefully. Address any doubts you may have by asking yourself what I can have to gain by misleading or exaggerating.

If you have any further involvement, as for the Ray family I hope you do as well as for history and the good that comes from serving it today, your basic assumption for the preservation of your own reputation and integrity must be that if Lane says it it is not true. I am not talking against him. I am giving you a sound caution and a basic rule deviation from which can be costly.

As an example, I hear you repeat some of his fabrications, that trees had been cut down to make shooting from the flophouse possible. Aside from all else that is wrong with this nuttiness it is plain false.

Lane never works, never checks and never cares as long as he can speak and get personal attention and get paid. I have the contemporaneous pictures and it isn't so. I avoid adding the such more that is possible.

Take anything you want from Code Name Zorro, which I call Zero, and you'll find it isn't true. Of course I'm talking about the minor fraction that has any real relationship with the King assassination. You might also want to check the index, to both editions, under my name and Lesar's and with me compare with what has since ensued. In this you would not waste your time to speak to Jes Payne, a great human being and one of the very greatest reporters, honest and impartial although he has become my cherished friend.

As best a non-lawyer can express opinions I give you my belief that with time and then with attention regardless of what this fink committee does I have enough to break the King case and it is absolutely solid. Les and Jim alone have some knowledge of this. I also believe that John and Carol have good cases, that she deserves redress and that this redress and the effort to obtain it may serve socially useful and otherwise valuable purposes. I am not at all sure this is true of Jerry, who I also know as none of you, including Lane, know. (Jerry and I get along well. He was kind enough to drive me home Friday, all the while still referring to Mark only as The Holy Man.)

There is also a case for John's having been framed by the FBI. I obtained some of the relevant evidence only this year and am still seeking more, which I do expect to get in time.

Mark has made it possible for the committee to address the King assassination by rebutting Mark. This is child's play. If the committee did it much less well than I could have - and note that I have been publicly silent on this - it nonetheless did it effectively and destructively to the establishing of truth. Until using the same dodge and means he used with James Earl ambulance-chased his way into the Ray case, there was a reasonably good prospect that Jim and I would be able to do something about it. I now will not make the effort as long as there is any direct or indirect Lane involvement. The reason is not personal, ample grounds as there are for personal feelings. Rather is it that I want success for the effort when it can be made. I do believe this is possible. I also believe that there neither is nor was this possibility the way Mark has gone and is going. What he has been doing would be disasterous if he ever got into court.

If you, singular or plural, would like to rep Carol and John you should also appreciate that it will mean more than the usual determined resistance by the FBI. Its present Director as judge laid 18 years on John when there was no real case and there was tainted evidence.

Were the committee's case against John other than the low-grade hearsay and conjecture that it is, it would still be ludicrous. There is none against Carol, not even fabricated, except for the committee's own fabrications.

Incredible as it may seem, for all its millions and the size of its staff, aside from fabrications the committee has nothing I have not had on the Rays or the King assassination, which is a minor part of its interest. I mean this quite literally. Nothing at all. This is almost as literally true of their JFK adventuring. I can think of but a single possibly substantial matter it used that I had not already published. This may be one of the reasons they never mention my name and made not a peep of protest whatever I did last Friday.

The ACLU has represented one Ernest Turley, who should have a first-rate action in St. Louis. He was framed, including by the FBI, in the effort to frame John with robbing a Laddonia, Mo. bank. He served about eight years and had his life and his family ruined. John, in his April executive session testimony, put the committee onto this. Jim has checked the transcript to confirm it. Perhaps in return for help the St. Louis ACLU might help? (To now they've declined several requests.)

I've never know Carol or John to lie and I've checked out some pretty farout stuff.

Carol is very nervous but she and her husband are stable people. Albert has worked for the same employer for about 15 years. Carol is a good and caring mother and daughter to the man who was less than a father should be to her.

Please excuse my errors. I'm trying to be informative, not popular, and I've an enormous amount of accumulated FOIA work that is past deadline.

Please, ~~if~~ you and Pepper, avoid the contamination and hurt that is possible. I can give you more dependable sources than you need to learn the realities. Policoff is one.

I think both of you were simply great in a noble and no longer popular tradition.

Our best,